

TOWN OF WESTFORD COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

The Town of Westford sets forth the following guidelines for road design which indicate the Town's preference for Complete Streets whenever possible. This policy indicates the Town's desire to accommodate as many modes of travel as practical within the transportation network which includes many miles of narrow, two lane roads.

Complete Streets principles include the development and implementation of projects in a context sensitive manner in which project implementation is sensitive to the community's physical, economic, and social setting. The context-sensitive approach to process and design includes a range of goals by considering stakeholder and community values on a level plane with the project need. It includes goals related to improved livability with greater participation of those affected in order to gain project consensus. The overall goal of this approach is to preserve and enhance scenic, aesthetic, historical, and environmental resources while improving or maintaining health, safety, mobility, and infrastructure conditions through a flexible design process.

Vision and Purpose:

Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety and accessibility for all the users of our roadways, trails and transit systems, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles and for people of all ages and of all abilities. Furthermore, Complete Streets principles contribute toward the safety, health, economic viability, and quality of life in a community by providing accessible and efficient connections between home, school, work, recreation and retail destinations by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments throughout communities. The purposes of Westford's Complete Streets policy are to:

- accommodate all users by creating a transportation network that attempts to meet the needs of individuals using a variety of transportation modes;
- encourage healthy opportunities for Westford residents such as walking and bicycling instead of driving;
- balance the needs of motorists and public safety vehicles with the environmental impacts of the transportation network; and
- reduce reliance on motor vehicles and thereby reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

It is the intent of the Town of Westford to plan, design, operate and maintain the transportation network so that it is safe for all users as a matter of routine. This policy guides decision-makers to consistently plan, design, and construct streets and other transportation facilities to accommodate all anticipated users including, but not limited to pedestrians, wheelchairs, bicyclists, motorists, transit, emergency vehicles, freight and commercial vehicles.

The Town's Complete Streets principles implement the following recommendations from Westford's 2009 Comprehensive Master Plan.

1. Adopt a policy to provide on-road bicycle accommodation on the major thoroughfares by increasing shoulder widths when roadways are reconstructed. Adopt a minimum shoulder width per Mass Highway guidelines for the particular roadway classification.
2. Provide sidewalks, trails and bicycle-safe routes that connect neighborhoods with villages, public facilities and schools, office buildings and retail space, community institutions and open space.

Definitions:

"**Complete Streets**" is the planning, scoping, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of roads in order to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities. Complete Streets considers the needs of motorists, pedestrians, transit users and vehicles, bicyclists, and commercial and emergency vehicles moving along and across roads, intersections, and crossings in a manner that is sensitive to the local context and recognizes that the needs vary in urban, suburban, and rural settings.

"**Complete Streets Infrastructure**" means physical street features that contribute to a safe, convenient, or comfortable travel experience for users, including but not limited to features such as: sidewalks; shared use paths; bicycle lanes; automobile lanes; paved shoulders; street trees and landscaping; planting strips; curbs; accessible curb ramps; bulb outs; crosswalks; refuge islands; pedestrian and traffic signals, including countdown and accessible signals; signage; street furniture; bicycle parking facilities; public transportation stops and facilities; transit priority signalization; traffic calming devices such as rotary circles, traffic bumps, and surface treatments such as paving blocks, textured asphalt, and concrete; narrow vehicle lanes; raised medians; and dedicated transit lanes.

"**Street**" means any right of way, public or private, including arterials, connectors, alleys, ways, lanes, and roadways by any other designation, as well as bridges, tunnels, and any other portions of the transportation network.

"**Street Project**" means the construction, reconstruction, retrofit, maintenance, alteration, or repair of any Street, and includes the planning, design, approval, and implementation processes, except that "Street Project" does not include minor routine upkeep such as cleaning, sweeping, mowing, spot repair, or interim measures on detour routes.

"**Legacy tree**" is a tree which, because of its great age, size or condition, is of exceptional cultural, landscape or nature conservation value.

Core Commitment:

The Town of Westford recognizes that all users of various modes of transportation, including, but not limited to, pedestrians, wheelchairs, bicyclists, transit, school bus riders, community transportation users, such as Council on Aging vans, motorists, delivery and service personnel,

freight haulers, and emergency responders, are legitimate users of streets and deserve safe facilities. “All Users” includes users of all ages and abilities.

The Town of Westford recognizes that whenever possible transportation projects, including new facilities, maintenance, and reconstruction, are opportunities to apply Complete Streets design principles. The Town will, to the maximum extent practical, design, construct, maintain, and operate its transportation network to provide for a comprehensive and integrated street network of facilities for all users.

1. Town of Westford Complete Streets Best Practices should guide the design of publicly and privately funded projects whenever possible.
2. Where feasible, transportation infrastructure and street design projects requiring funding or approval by the Town of Westford, as well as projects funded by the state and federal government, such as the Chapter 90 funds, City improvement grants, Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the MassWorks Infrastructure Program, Capital Funding and other state and federal funds for street and infrastructure design shall consider the Town of Westford Complete Streets Best Practices as listed below.
3. The Planning Board will consider whether the Subdivision Rules and Regulations need modification to comply with Complete Streets design principles so that new subdivisions and other private developments and related street design components or corresponding street-related components shall comply with Town of Westford Complete Streets Best Practices.
4. In addition, to the extent practical, state-owned roadways will comply with the Town of Westford Complete Streets Best Practices Policy, including the design, construction, and maintenance of such roadways within Town boundaries.

Exemptions:

A transportation infrastructure project may be excluded from the requirements of this policy, upon approval by the Board of Selectmen, provided, however, that any such exemption shall be determined by an approval process for policy exemptions which shall include consultation with staff from applicable town departments and a review of relevant documentation or data, and, if any of the following conditions exist:

1. Facilities where specific users are prohibited by law, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls are exempt from the Best Practices. An effort will be made, in these cases for accommodations elsewhere.
2. All transportation facilities that are limited to non-motorized transportation modes, such as multi-use paths, pedestrian paths and malls, bicycle paths, and walking and hiking trails are exempt from the Best Practices.

3. The cost or environmental impacts of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use or probable future use.
4. Other Town policies, regulations, or requirements contradict or preclude the implementation of this Policy, even after such policies, regulations, and requirements have been examined and updated in an effort to be consistent with the Town of Westford Complete Streets Policy.
5. Where such facilities would constitute a threat to public safety.
6. The impact of accommodation would result in the loss of significant legacy trees or natural resources whose value outweighs the advantages of the Complete Street infrastructure.

Best Practices:

The Town of Westford Complete Streets policy promotes a connected, integrated network that serves all users. The Town recognizes that the transportation network is used by a variety of modes; including, but not limited to vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, and wheelchairs. Complete Streets and Complete Streets Infrastructure to the maximum extent practical should be considered when developing new policies, planning, and designing of public and private projects; including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, repair, and maintenance of transportation facilities on streets and redevelopment projects.

Implementation of the Town of Westford Complete Streets Policy will be carried out cooperatively among relevant departments in the Town of Westford with multi-jurisdictional cooperation, to the greatest extent possible, among private developers, and state, regional, and federal agencies.

The Town of Westford recognizes that “Complete Streets Infrastructure” may be achieved through single elements incorporated into a particular project or incrementally through a series of smaller improvements or maintenance activities over time.

The latest design guidance, standards, and recommendations available that should be consulted include the following resources:

- The Massachusetts Department of Transportation Project Design and Development Guidebook (2006);
- Sustainable Neighborhood Road Design: A Guidebook for Massachusetts Cities and Towns, May 2011; American Planning Association – Massachusetts Chapter and Homebuilders Association of Massachusetts.

- The latest edition of American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highway and Streets;
- The United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration's Manual on Uniform Traffic Design Controls (2009);
- The Architectural Access Board (AAB) 521CMR Rules and Regulations; and
- Documents and plans created for the Town of Westford, such as bicycle and pedestrian network plans, Subdivision Rules and Regulations, Stormwater Rules and Regulations, the Comprehensive Master Plan, and the Route 110 Master Plan.

Implementation:

The Town will consider Complete Streets Best Practices as a routine part of everyday operations, when designing transportation projects and programs, and will consider complete Streets Best Practices in coordination with other departments, agencies, and jurisdictions to achieve Complete Streets.

1. Complete Streets implementation and effectiveness should be regularly evaluated for success and opportunities for improvement. The town will develop performance measures to gauge implementation and effectiveness of the best practices.
2. Town will review and either revise or develop proposed revisions to all appropriate planning documents (master plans, open space and recreation plan, etc.), zoning and subdivision codes, laws, procedures, rules, regulations, guidelines, programs, and templates to integrate Complete Streets principles in all transportation projects. A committee of relevant stakeholders designated by the Town Manager will be created to implement this initiative.
3. The Town will maintain a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian and bicycle facility infrastructure in order to prioritize projects to eliminate gaps in the sidewalk and bikeway network.
4. The Town will reevaluate Capital Improvement Projects prioritization to encourage implementation of Complete Streets.
5. The Town will train pertinent town staff and decision-makers on the content of Complete Streets Infrastructure and principles and best practices for implementing policy through workshops and other appropriate means.
6. The Town will use inter-department coordination to promote the most responsible and efficient use of resources for activities within the public way.

7. The Town will seek out appropriate sources of funding and grants for implementation of Complete Streets policies.

Approved by the Board of Selectmen on April 26, 2016